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SOVIET NUKE WARBASES IN CUBA

Sites being readied for subs, jets, says report

By NILES LATHAM N.Y. Post Correspondent
WASHINGTON — The Soviet Union is building bases for nuclear submarines, strategic bomber planes and chemical weapons in Cuba in a steady and flagrant violation of 1962 accords signed by the Kremlin in the aftermath of the missile crisis, The Post has learned.

Intelligence reports were obtained by The Post

last night as tension between Cuba and the United States increased over El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Many Pentagon and CIA analysts have concluded that the threat to the security of the U.S. from Cuba and its partner Nicaragua is now much greater than

it was in 1962 when President Kennedy sent out a worldwide alert and demanded that the Kremlin withdraw nuclear missiles and offensive bombers it had stationed in Cuba.

The new reports give a startling picture of the Soviet military buildup in Cuba, just 90 miles from the coast of Florida.

They reveal:

- The Soviets are building a strategic submarine base in Cienfuegos where Soviet Golf and Echo subs armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic and cruise missiles frequently stop.

The base apparently also has a "nuclear weapons handling facility" representing an "instantaneous strategic offensive threat" to the United States.

- Some Russian-built surface-to-air missiles have been modified to include "strap-on booster stages" which give them a much longer range than is required for defense.

Many analysts believe that with the addition of the boosters, these anti-aircraft missiles could strike targets in

the Southern and Eastern U.S.

- The Soviet Union is flying and basing versions of the sophisticated TU-95 bomber, which can also carry nuclear weapons, in Cuba.

According to some intelligence reports the Soviets have established a secret airfield near Havana.

The Soviets claim the TU-95s in Cuba are not equipped for offensive purposes and are used only for reconnaissance.

But U.S. officials note they are far more sophisticated than the IL-28 jets President Kennedy demanded the Soviets withdraw from Cuba in 1962 and can easily be "retooled" for bombing missions.

Cuba also recently received a shipment of about 40 nuclear-capable

MIG-23 warplanes, although sources say they probably do not have atomic weapons on board.

- The Soviets may have recently sent equipment and ingredients for chemical and biological weapons to Cuba.

Once made, these weapons can easily be deployed on MIG or TU-95 fighters, modified SAM-rockets or submarine-launched missiles. Cuba, al-

- Cuba received 66,000 tons of Soviet military hardware in 1981 — a figure three times higher than was dispatched by the Kremlin in 1962.

The reports also noted that early last year a fleet of Soviet ships sailed, virtually unchallenged by the U.S., around the Caribbean and Gulf Coast near oil fields in Mexico, Venezuela, Texas and Louisiana.

Rep. Jack Kemp (R-NY) has joined Sens. Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Steve Symms (R-Idaho) in demanding that the State Department releases all documents on the 1962 Khrushchev-Kennedy accords and possible changes in them that were negotiated by Henry Kissinger during the SALT talks.

"The Soviet Union's record of an extensive military buildup in Cuba and its systematic expansion of Cuba's position to serve as a base for aggressive action (in Nicaragua and El Salvador) leads me to believe it has violated its pledge not to place offensive weapons in Cuba," Kemp said.

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